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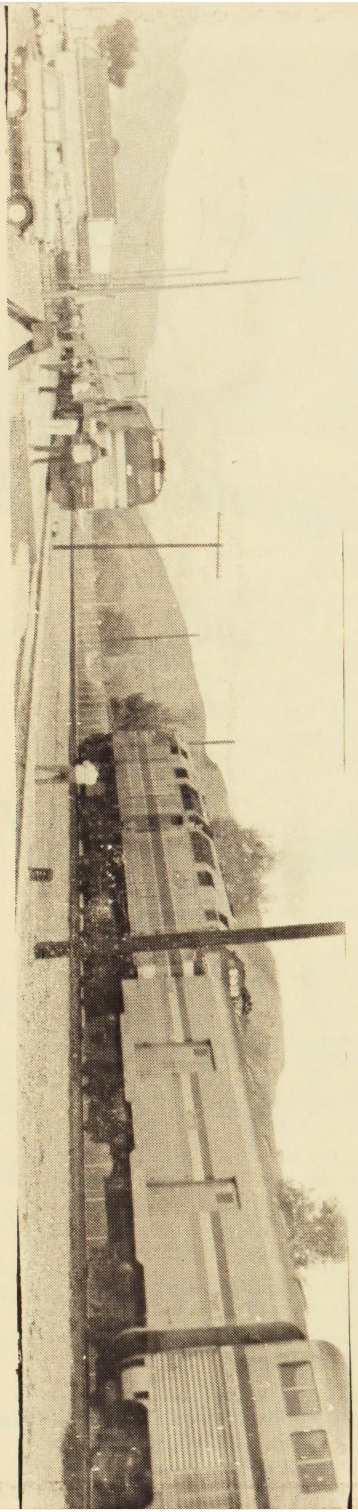

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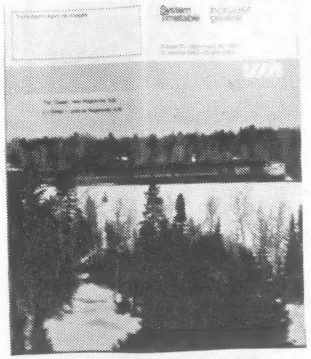
THE COVER STORY

On Nov 5, 1982 the southbound SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA made a special scheduled stop in Berkeley CA to entrain a group of football fans heading to Los Angeles for the game between University of California, Berkeley and USC. The northbound SPIRIT stopped again in Berkeley the morning of Nov 7 for returning rooters. The train was dubbed the "Golden Bear Express" by its promoters, and it was decorated with flags and the Cal bear emblem (see cover photo), with the train name on the sides of cars. The stops were made at the China Station Restaurant, the site of the former University Avenue station. The southbound train crossed over to the eastbound track, for safety reasons, to board passengers. The crossover was made somewhere between Richmond and Berkeley, and helped put the train 30mins late, as it waited for the northbound COAST STARLIGHT to clear Richmond. A goodly crowd was on hand for the event, including a TV film crew and National Guardsmen from Stockton who brought generators and lights for the after-dark boarding. No. 15 eased up past the restaurant at 9:35, with F40 engine 242 and its usual consist of HEP baggage and sleeper and Amfleet cars. It was the first time that a passenger train made a scheduled stop in Berkeley since May, 1971, and it was the first such football train since 1953. All the rooting didn't help the Cal team much, however, for they were trounced 42-0. Photos by RTN.

AMTRAK SIGNS HISTORIC AGREEMENT WITH UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION

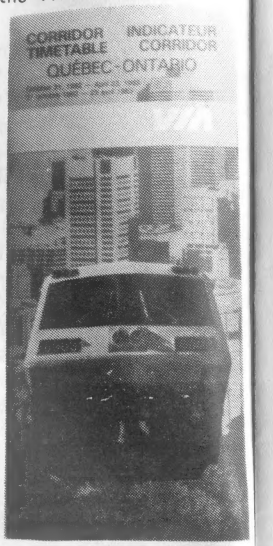
Amtrak announced on Nov 8 that it had that day signed an historic agreement with the General Chairman representing the United Transportation Union members who work in Amtrak facilities and on Amtrak trains between Philadelphia and Harrisburg and between New York and Washington, while a similar labor agreement was still being negotiated with UTU workers between New York and Boston and between New Haven and Springfield. The agreement enables Amtrak to take over the UTU workers, formerly railroad employees, by Jan 1. It bases UTU crew pay on number of hours worked rather than on a combination of hours and miles. The crews on the Phila-Harrisburg route will change immediately to the hourly pay system, Amtrak said, while the system will be phased in over a 3-year period for the NY-Washington crews. Wage increases in 1983 will be 3% less than the national pattern in the railroad industry but similar to those of other unions that have reached agreements with Amtrak this year. The agreement will give Amtrak more flexibility in starting times for yard crews, improved productivity of NY-Washington crews, and eliminate special payments for such tasks as conducting cars thru car washers. It also set a moratorium on on changing the agreement or making new compensation changes until July 1, 1984.

RAIL CANADA



VIA'S SYSTEM TIMETABLE effective Oct 31-Apr 23, 1983 is pictured at left. The color cover picture is of the OCEAN near Rogersville, N.B. The 56-page timetable is very much like its predecessor. There has been no further improvement in the readibility of the schedules. VIA should study the Amtrak timetables, which are remarkably attractive and readable, and try to imitate them. At below right is new Quebec-Ontario corridor timetable. One good feature of the latter is a table of connecting intercity services at Montreal, Toronto and London.

A FEDERAL COURT has reversed a lower court decision and ruled that the Federal Transport Minister acted illegally when he ordered the VIA train cuts of Nov 1981. The government has until Nov 19 to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court. Transport 2000-Saskatchewan, which has been pursuing this case, is desperately in need of money to continue financing this legal action. Rail supporters can send donations, large or small, to Transport-2000 Saskachewan, Box 3594, Regina, Sask. S4P 3L7.



NOV 1981 CUTBACKS did not save VIA Rail $100 million as planned, but only $60 million, said Transport 2000 President Guy Chartrand in a letter to regional directors. Thus VIA will remain underfunded, so that it will not be able to buy new Railiners that it desperately needs. "...there is no future for VIA Rail without a VIA Rail Act", Chartrand said. (Such an act would be analogous to the Amtrak Act which established Amtrak as an entity with certain rights.)

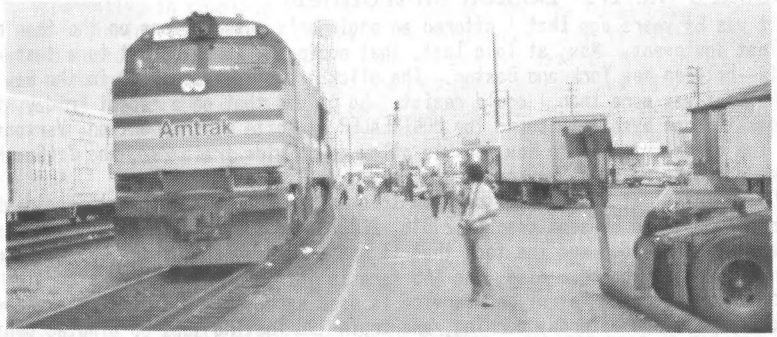
CN WATERFRONT LAND development plans for Toronto were unveiled recently, and appear to call for removal of VIA's train storage and servicing facilities west of Union Station. Where VIA will go seems to be a question mark.

A BATTLE RAGES in Vancouver over proposals to scrap the former CP Rail roundhouse near False Creek. It lies on what is proposed for "British Columbia Place," an exhibition-type park. Some groups want the facility removed to make for a modernistic appearance, while those of a more historic frame of mind want it preserved for possible museum use. The roundhouse is adjacent to the former CP Rail coachyards, also being removed for the project. The Dunsmuir Street tunnel, which connected the yards to the former CP station on the waterfront, will become a double-deck tunnel for the ALRT project linking Vancouver and New Westminster.

CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS Commission has decided that a cargo checker told that he must retire at age 65 could keep working. CN had told Harry Prior of Nova Scotia that he must retire at 65, while the CHRC later decided that that age did not constitute the "normal" retirement age for employees in similar positions. Prior had worked on the job in Halifax since 1945.

CORRECTION: In RTN #251 we ran a news item on the Alaska cruise ship "Prince George." Canadian Cruise Lines President Rick Wright informs us that the ship was not foreclosed by the bank; passenger loads were sufficient to break even on 1982 operations; and no crew have gone without pay. RTN regrets the error.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT



OXNARD-LOS ANGELES commuter train which began operation on Oct 18 is shown above in a photo by Dan Lovegren. The photo shows the first northbound train at Oxnard on the first day of operation. In its first six days of operation, the new trains were showing steadily increasing ridership. Total counts, for the four runs, was as follows: 339 (inaugural day crowd), 192, 230, 245, 250, 239. Some newspapers were saying negative things about the trains. After five days of operation, the Long Beach Press Telegram said the public was "slow to respond" to the new service. (Any new service takes some time to build up patronage.) The San Francisco Daily Commercial News called the train a "gigantic boondoggle." The Van Nuys Daily News reported that trains were running up to 30mins late, being sidetracked for the COAST STARLIGHT; it said that only three of 10 northbound trains in the last week of October were on time.

GASOLINE TAX INCREASE plan of Transportation Secretary Lewis's last year was opposed by President Reagan. This year the plan is being revived, and Reagan shows signs of going along with it--partly as an alternative to a Democratically-proposed jobs bill. Reagan prefers to call it a "user fee" rather than a tax, as he has promised no tax increases; and he didn't mention at a recent news conference (see also "Quotes of the Week", page 8) that it would help fund mass transit: The tax increase--5¢ per gallon--is largely for highway repairs, and would raise an estimated $5.5 billion. The New York Times said that Lewis's funding plan could be derailed by the Democrats' jobs bill that might use the same money for non-transportation purposes.

SAN FRANCISCO COMMUTE train extension to the Ferry Building is progressing, and could come before the end of the year. Caltrans wants it before Christmas.

CHICAGO'S SOUTH SHORE Line is scheduled to have its new cars in service on Nov 22, replacing the present RTA diesel locomotives and bi-level equipment.

NEW JERSEY TRANSIT on Nov 11 ordered the discontinuance of rail commuter runs on the West Trenton line, with last runs Dec 3. It also decided to hold public hearings on discontinuance of service west of High Bridge on the Phillipsburg line. NJT wants to drop the service around Jan 1. Hearings will start Nov 29. NJT wants to remove agents from 37 rail stations as a cost-cutting means.

PHILADELPHIA'S COMMUTER RAIL system faces "bleak prospects", NARP said. A permanent shutdown could occur Jan 1. SEPTA wants to reduce the pay of railroad workers by 34%, to the same level as Philadelphia transit workers. Among other things, a shutdown of the system would be disastrous for Amtrak, NARP said, as the two interconnect and share many riders and facilities. SEPTA will hold hearings on Dec 6-9 and 13 on this and on discontinuing SEPTA-sponsored service to New Jersey and Delaware.

FIRST CLASS TO NEW ENGLAND
Aboard the NY-Boston Metroliner

by Bill McDonald

It was 6½ years ago that I offered an engineer's observations on the then new Amfleet equipment. Now, at long last, that equipment is being put to a test--of sorts--between New York and Boston. The slick promotion appearing in the New York Times was more than I could resist. So it was that on a recent Friday night I took it upon myself to board the MONTREALER at White River Junction, Vermont for the overnight trip to New York to allow me to ride train 292, the 7:40am New York-Boston Metroliner Service.

Upon arrival at New York I found on track 8 the following consist: engine 936, lounge 28003, and 60-seat coaches 21816, 21802, and 21856. It was not surprising, given the early hour and the fact that it was Saturday, that there was not more than a bus load aboard. Also, the $45 fare is just about twice the excursion round trip, assuming Metroliner service is used each way. With little expense account travel on Saturday morning, and train 190 leaving just 39 minutes behind No. 292, it would appear that as of early November most travelers don't believe the added cost is worth the time saved or the free coffee.

We departed at exactly 7:40 and proceeded at a reasonable pace thru the East River Tunnel. A pleasant welcome aboard was announced over the P.A. system. At 7:45 we passed Harold Tower, slowed to the prescribed 30mph briefly as we crossed over to the Hell Gate Bridge line, and resumed a comfortable 55mph pace up to the bridge. It was a clear morning, the sun still low to the east. The view of the Manhattan skyline was impressive if not awesome as the light reflected off thousands of buildings almost at a 90° angle.

Despite much track work, the branch, as it is called, between Harold Tower in Queens and Shell Junction where the four-track line from Grand Central is joined, is still relatively slow running ground. We passed Shell at 8:06am, having used 26 minutes for the first 20 miles. We were now on the former New Haven Railroad's famous four-track Shore Line, and our pace quickened to about 70-75mph as we passed thru Westchester suburbs. We slowed slightly for the reverse curve thru Rye, and dramatically--to perhaps 30mph--for the severe curve at Port Chester, the last town in New York. We resumed our moderate 70-75mph pace before slowing again at the Cos Cob drawbridge. It is here that we pass the infamous Cos Cob generating station, the source of power for the New Haven line and much trouble. The station is planned to be phased out in favor of commercially purchased power at some point--according to many reports, the sooner the better.

We made our first stop at Stamford, Connecticut, arriving two minutes late at 8:25 and departing at 8:26. Only five boarded here. I made my way to the Amfleet II lounge car to try the New England breakfast, as it is called. The service was good, I must say. The steward and waiter were both polite and friendly in welcoming me. The breakfast is a cheese omelet with sausage, Canadian bacon and home-fried potatoes. Served with stainless dinnerware, it is quite acceptable even if it is the only item available. The larger windows of the Amfleet II equipment are very conspicuous and welcome.

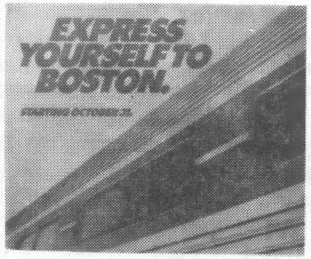
We continued our moderate pace and I remarked to myself that.thus far there had been no improvement in our running speed over recent years. The deferred maintenance is, or seems to be, gone, but 70mph is still the limit, with quite a number of permanent restrictions for curves and drawbridges.

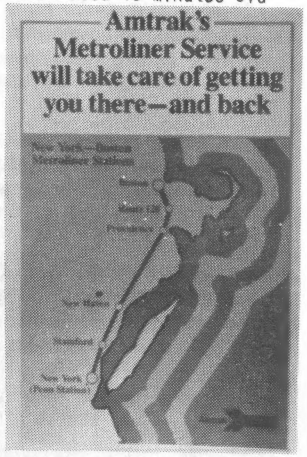
We passed S. Norwalk and an arriving SPV off the Danbury branch at 8:33. At 8:45 we slowed for the famous 35mph curve leading into Bridgeport. This was the scene of the FEDERAL EXPRESS derailment in the late 1950s. It was dubbed by George Alpert, then president of the New Haven, as "the severest curve on the New Haven Railroad."

We reached New Haven at 9:04 and consumed two minutes threading our way at 10mph into the station, stopping at 9:06, three minutes late. The schedule allows only six minutes to change to diesel power here. Our "Mitey Mouse" cut off at 9:07 and I was surprised to see two F40s back down and "tie on" at 9:10--No. 208 in the lead, followed by 210 in back-to-back symmetrical fashion. The brakes were tested and we were underway at 9:14--five minutes late. Two minutes were lost, apparently, in coupling the 480-volt jumpers for the hotel power.

I was beginning to perceive a wave of nostalgia now. For it was between New Haven and Boston that I once worked in engine service back in the Penn Central and early Amtrak years. I retired to the rear of the train now to view the physical plant. I know the plant is better; it was so bad in those years it would seem there was nowhere to go except up. Actually, the entire line east of New Haven was expected to close at least to thru traffic at any time in the mid 1970s due to the expected failure of the Connecticut River bridge at Old Saybrook. When repairs were finally begun on the bridge in 1975, the condition of it was so bad that it was closed for about a week or so on two occasions. Passenger trains were turned at New Haven and New London with buses covering the gap.

That is all changed for the better now. All the slow orders are gone. The best time I ever made between New Haven and Old Saybrook, 33 miles, was 30 minutes. This morning we covered the distance in 29 minutes. We then used 16 minutes Old Saybrook to New London; my best time was 17 minutes.





Our pace was now in the 80 to 90mph range. A heavy brake application approaching the three 60mph curves at Rocky Neck beach resulted in wheel sliding. The din now became a little louder with some minor flat spots. It doesn't take two F40s long to accelerate our four-car train back to a brisk 80mph along the beach. We slowed to 70mph and then to 60mph for several curves leading into Waterford and New London. We passed New London without stopping. This was a first.

The Thames River was crossed, and Groton Tower passed, with its anachronistic semaphores, at 10:02am. The days of the semaphores are apparently numbered, as a new signal bridge is in place at the east end of the interlocking limits. The maelstrom of fallen leaves in the train's wake added to the sensation of speed at this time of year in New England. Were they flying and swirling!

The views were typically New England between New London and Stonington, Connecticut. The right of way is very close to or along the water here. Many yachts were still in the water, adding to the seascape effect. A new drawbridge is under construction at Mystic.

Our speed continually rose and fell as we slowed for numerous 55 and 60mph curves in the area and accelerated on the short tangents between. The scenery was superb, the running ground anything but. As we approached Stonington, Connecticut I had a flashback. It was here that the hapless Patrick Gray "twisted in the wind" during his brief tenure as FBI Director, following J. Edgar Hoover's

death. He was the Nixon administration's sacrificial lamb. Poor Pat, I thought, as we rounded the 55mph curve thru Stonington and quickly accelerated to 80mph before leaving the coast; I wondered if he still lives here.

We were now in Rhode Island, and passed Westerly at 10:17. We had used 18 minutes from New London. It always took me 20 minutes even on the Turbo Train, but then the Turbos were "dogs" when it came to acceleration. This diminutive thing we were on today was a hustler par excellence.

We were approaching some of the best running ground on the Shore Line: the six-mile tangent thru the Kingston Swamp and then another seven or so tangent miles over what is called Wickford Hill and thru Davisville, Rhode Island. Our speed quickened to 90mph several miles east of Westerly and remained at or just below it until we entered the Kingston tangent at milepost 155--affectionately termed "biscuit city" by the old New Haven men, tho there is no city of any sort anywhere in evidence.

It required three miles to reach 100mph, but we did and we remained at that speed until milepost 170, approaching East Greenwich, Rhode Island. The next ten miles were covered at between 88 and 96mph.

We were down to 55 at milepost 180 and approaching Providence. Our stop there was at 10:48, only one minute off. We had covered the 113 miles from New Haven over what is probably the most serpentine high-speed rail line at least in this country in one hour, 34 minutes, for a 72mph average speed. I would note that as very respectable, given the characteristics of the route.

Our final sprint into Boston was just that. After five miles of 50-55mph running leaving Providence, our F40s were in "run 8"--wide open--at milepost 190. By milepost 193 we were again up to 100mph and we remained there as we passed thru Attleboro, Mansfield and Sharon, Massachusetts. At milepost 213 we slowed for the 40mph slow order at Canton Junction, Massachusetts. This slow order was in place six years ago when I last ran a train thru Canton. It lasts only a few seconds, and the leaves were dancing in our wake once again.

We passed the Route 128 station without stopping--another first. A mile or so east of Route 128 we swung to the right and entered what the New Haven called the Second District--a freight line into South Boston. It is a temporary main line while the main stem thru Back Bay is rebuilt to accommodate a rapid transit line that is being relocated along its right of way. Our pace was a more leisurely 60-65mph thru the Dorchester section of Boston. We slowed to 20 or so at South Bay interlocking at 11:24 and one mile later stopped at South Station, Boston at 11:27, eight minutes ahead of schedule. We had used 38 minutes from Providence. This is the best I had ever seen. The two hours, 13 minutes time from New Haven averages to 70.8mph.

This was both an enjoyable and an impressive experience. Both the on-board services and the operations were top notch. Success may require a later New York departure on Saturday, and the inclusion of high-density coaches with acceptance of coach tickets, however. Boston does indeed have a first class service after a hiatus that was much too long.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"...this particular subject is under discussion but it was under discussion a year ago and at that time I asked the Department of Transportation, Drew Lewis, the Secretary, to hold off, certainly for another year, because of the economic problems we face... ...if we do it, it is a, it would be a user fee. It would be dedicated to the rebuilding of our highways and bridges."

--President Reagan at Nov 11 news conference answering question about proposal for increased gasoline tax.

TWENTY SEVEN-ELEVEN: Pasco to Frisco by train
by Glenn Lee

The winter constellation Orion was riding high as I drove to the Amtrak station in Pasco, Washington in the wee hours of a September morning. Winter is coming soon. It was a quick schedule: alarm clock rang at 3:10am, car departed my driveway 3:25am, arrived at the depot 3:35am, with a 3-car EMPIRE BUILDER No. 27 backing in from the SP&S route at 3:38am. The BUILDER has been operating both directions on the SP&S route for several weeks due to track work on the ex-NP line between Spokane and Pasco. The consist of the train was locomotive 206, sightseer lounge 33005, coach-baggage car 31037, and sleeper 32014.

I noted coach passengers sprawled in various random examples of disarray as I boarded, a sure sign of a light load, and soon found a good seat, and hardly had time to adjust when at 3:43am the Great Train sprang to life, moving forward slowly, and round the curve just west of the depot, to drift downgrade to the Columbia River bridge.

A moment to reflect on bygone days. This was the route I had taken for a number of seasons each fall en route from home to attend college at U.C. Berkeley, and there was a feeling of mellowness retracing the old steps. Previous trips to the Bay Area in the fall had started aboard such vintage gems as NP 371, an 8-6-4 sleeping car, or perhaps GN 1378 "Firebrand Pass", a 6-5-2, now all dearly departed, and much missed.

At 3:50am we were clattering across the Great Bridge, now nearly 100 years old, and within moments picking up speed thru suburban east Kennewick. BN definitely wants the EMPIRE BUILDER to hurry here, as the employees' timetable gives No. 27 three minutes, from 3:50am to 3:53am, to cover the 5.7 miles between Kennewick Siding (the word "siding" was added after the BN merger to to differentiate it from "Kennewick", which retains that name on the ex-NP line nearby.) The track was good, and our Superliner car slid quietly along as if gliding on the smoothest of glass. The only negative noticeable was an up-down vibration at certain speeds near the middle of the car--something that the ex-Milwaukee Pullman-Standard full-length dome cars all did from time to time, and also some of the ex-CBQ dome coaches such as "Silver Brand." But nothing serious.

At 4:01am we passed the east switch at Yellepit (pronounced Yuh-LEPP-it) siding, at the eastern entrance to Wallula Gap. We were really rolling. It.seemed to take only seconds to traverse the 7,136-foot distance of the siding, and then round the 60mph curve at the ramparts of the gap. Moments later, we were thru the curve and speeding again on the long stretches of tangent track, built here in the early 1950s when McNary Dam was under construction, raising the water level some 80 feet at the dam and some 40 feet or more at the upper end of the gap.

This stretch of track is one of my favorite hiking trails, and over the years I have walked most of it from mile 219 south of Finley to mile 210 west of Yellepit, which extends approximately from mile 215 to mile 216.5. It's safe, since rattlesnakes stay away. It's quiet, as there is no road on the Washington side of the gap, and it's pleasant. Seldom do you see anyone or hear anything except the trains, and they can be heard some distance away.

The walls of the gap rise 800 feet or more above the tracks in great vertical cliffs, and across the river can be seen the famous "Twin Sisters" (sometimes called "Two Captains") basalt rock formation noted in Lewis and Clark's journals. Just around the corner west of the entrance to the gap are a series of ponds formed by railroad construction fill. These are very beautiful places to fish or swim, far, far away from the roar of metropolis--if you are prepared to spend an hour or so walking on the rail grade.

At the end of the last Ice Age, a massive wall of ice east of Sandpoint, Idaho blocked the Clark Fork valley containing today's ex-NP BN mainline from Spokane to Missoula. Glacial Lake Missoula held back by this dam extended to a point near Garrison, Montana. Remnants of the beaches can be seen on the hill above the University of Montana at Missoula from the BN depot there. The lake contained a greater volume of water than Lake Michigan today.

The glacier was a strong one, reaching from the Canadian Rockies north of Revelstoke south thru Kootenay Lake, and down the valley between Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint, route of today's EMPIRE BUILDER. When the ice dam broke, within a 48-hour period the entire lake drained away as rushing waters made mush of the ice dam more than 1000 feet in height. It produced the greatest single rush of water known to science. It roared thru Spokane hundreds of feet deep, and cresting the rimlands to the west, carved out the channeled scablands between Cheny and Pasco. When the flood reached Wallula Gap, it could not pass thru quickly.

A massive temporary lake formed in Eastern Washington, 1000 feet or more above sea level, about the height of the flatlands atop each rampart of the gap. The lake formed

(continued on page 19)

THE PANIC BOX

The following is a summary of major unusual occurrences on the Amtrak system during the period of July 1-15.

(NOTE: Number in parentheses after train no. is date train left city of origin)

7-1 Empire Service disrupted by CR frt derail't east of Spuyten Duyvil: 100-ton hopper cars on side; psgrs bused Croton-Harmon to NY, 1-hr delays; track restored July 2.
7-1 ADIRONDACKS delayed 3hrs nb, 139" sb due to work train derail't Ft Ticonderoga
7-1 NORTH STAR #10 delayed 40" detour on Soo Line Duluth-Superior; BN Wisconsin Drawbridge jammed by heat between Duluth & Superior.
7-1 BROADWAY #40(30) delayed 92" betw Trenton & Newark when engine 913 failed due to loose battery charger connection.
7-1 HOOSIER STATE #318 delayed 133" just outside Chicago, engine 302 failed.
7-1 COLONIAL #95 stuck behind Chessie frt stalled west of Williamsburg 110".
7-1 SAN JOAQUIN #710 held 60mins at Corcoran; ATSF frt ahead with engine on fire.
7-1 EMPIRE BUILDER #8 delayed 105" Wenatchee-Spokane, missing strap bolt on car 32052, 45mph speed restriction.
7-1 Richmond CA station flooded, closed temporarily.
7-2 SAN JOAQUIN #708 delayed 50", ATSF frt derail't at Allensworth CA.
7-2 Corridor train 284 hit debris at milepost 84, was terminated.
7-2 SF ZEPHYR detoured, flooding in Iowa (see RTN #248).
7-2 Corridor train 290 stoned by vandals at Van-nest, engineer's windshield broken; ran at 30mph to New Haven, delayed 72" (engine 923).
7-2 BROADWAY #41(2) had brake probs leaving Pittsburgh; delayed 136 minutes.
7-2 Corridor train 127 hit debris just S of Baltimore, delayed 148 minutes.
7-3 MONTREALER #61(2) hit unoccupied car at East Windsor CT, delayed 70".
7-3 NIGHT OWL #67(2) delayed 119" at Holly, engine failure unit 972.
7-4 Corridor train 189(3) hit debris south of Gwynn, delayed 84".
7-4 Milwaukee Road frt derailed 8 cars at 2:45pm betw Wisconsin Dells & Tomah, blocking single track; same train at 4:05 derailed 16 more cars at Wisconsin Dells, two of them damaging the station. EMPIRE BUILDER #7(4) detoured on C&NW Milwaukee-La Crosse, delayed 264"; #8(3) and 7(5) will detour on BN La Crosse-Chicago via Dubuque-Savanna-Aurora, with about 1hr delay each.
7-4 MONTREALERS blocked by B&M engine derail't at White River Jct, 97"nb,353"sb.
7-4 CITY OF NEW ORLEANS #59(3) delayed 94" by signal failures in Fulton & Memphis areas due to severe weather.
7-4 SILVER METEOR #87(4) had damaged pantograph engine 963 & pulled down wire at Edgewood, delayed 86"; seven other trains also delayed.
7-4 LAKE SHORE LTD #48(4) hit auto at Huron OH, which had driven around crossing gates; two occupants killed; train delayed 97".
7-5 Family traveling on EMPIRE BUILDER #7(3) allegedly had chicken pox; meals served in room; room stripped & disinfected upon train's arrival.
7-6 Corridor train 187 terminated Baltimore after striking debris on tracks.
7-6 SOUTHWEST LTD #4(4) was hit in side of 2nd engine by a car at Noria KS; no injuries (engine 291, 335, 11 cars). Delayed 52".
7-6 PALMETTO #90 hit a tractor trailer at Henly SC at 1:15pm; engineer suffered scratches from broken windshield; train delayed 89".
7-6 ILLINOIS ZEPHYR #347 162" late due to running at 15mph due to heavy rain & high water Mendota-West Quincy.
7-7 CITY OF NEW ORLEANS #58(6), with engines 262 & 304 & 11 cars, derailed the 5th & 6th cars at Union Ave. in Chicago on the BN at 9:10am. Rear 5 cars with psgrs towed into Union Station--1hr late. 341 psgrs aboard.

7-7 SAN DIEGAN #573 hit trespasser 6mis east of Oceanside CA; delayed 40mins.
7-8 NIGHT OWL #66(7) hit trespasser at 2:20am at Elizabeth NJ; delayed 52".
7-8 PALMETTO #89 delayed 85" at Washington to cool hot cars 21042 & 20045.
7-8 SF ZEPHYR #6(7) delayed 85" at Green River WY; engine 234 failure.
7-9 COAST STARLIGHT #11(8) hit tractor trailer at Spence CA; engine crew had minor injuries; train delayed 29".
7-9 SILVER METEOR #87(9) delayed 64" by engine problems Hudson-Philadelphia.
7-9 SF ZEPHYR #5(8), already 2'50" late due to continuing detour, delayed 90" at Rawlings WY due to dragging part on engine UP 9000.
7-9 LAKE SHORE #49(9) delayed 83" by dragging brake on baggage 1614, which caught fire, at Buffalo.
7-10 Washouts on the MoPac between St. Louis & Jefferson City MO disrupted schedules of Chicago-Springfield-St. Louis-Kansas City trains.
7-10 EMPIRE BUILDER #7(10) delayed 130mins by mud slides at Oconomowoc WI on Milw.
7-11 SOUTHWEST LTD #3(10) delayed 73" just west of Kansas City due to stranded auto blocking tracks, on ATSF.
7-10 Grenada MS Amtrak station burglarized of $130.
7-10 CITY OF NEW ORLEANS #59(10) delayed 36", slpr 2463 removed at Carbondale due to hotbox; 18 psgrs downgraded to coach, given free breakfasts.
7-11 PALMETTO #89 delayed 68" when Sunnywide Yard lost its power due to Con Edison line problem.
7-11 SILVER STAR #81(11) delayed 73" by hep prblems at Alexandria.
7-11 SILVER METEOR #88(11) delayed 64", signal failure Jacksonville-Jessup.
7-12 COAST STARLIGHTS blocked by SP frt derail't betw Paso Robles & Sta Margarita CA. Trains terminated at San Luis Obispo & 36mis west of there & psgrs bused between trains, which turned.
7-13 SPIRIT OF CALIF #18(12) hit a cylinder placed by vandals on track east of Oakland, causing nick in flange of right front wheel of engine 239. It was repaired at Sacramento, but SP said the wheel caused ½-inch fissures in 70 miles of track and put 20mph slow order on eastbd main for evaluation; trains 6 & 710 lost 110" & 36"; train 14(13) ran on westbd track to avoid the slow orders, lost 84".
7-13 SUNSET LTD #1(12) lost 88" Marfa-Aragon TX due to probs with engines 704 & 711; SP 9149 added to Los Angeles.
7-14 SOUTHWEST LTD #4(12) blocked by washout at Osage City KS, backed up to Emporia & detoured from there on ATSF Second District, making up 27", of time lost (92") awaiting train orders and backing.
7-15 SF ZEPHYR #5(15) almost stranded by flood waters at Maxon IA; departed Albia IA at 2:30pm & detoured on BN Burlington IA-Kansas City MO, then on UP Kansas City-Cheyenne; Denver psgrs bused Cheyenne-Denver; #5(16) & 6(15) detoured on C&NW Chicago-Omaha, a detour that was to continue several days. #5(15) reached Cheyenne 23'46" late & terminated at Ogden & psgrs transferred to #5(16); psgrs given free meals.
7-15 CRESCENT #20(14) lost 1'40" when engine 965 went dead at Newark.
7-15 ELECTRIC CITY EXPRESS #75(15) delayed 85" by Conrail local ahead at Irvington, on fire; fire dept put a hold on all tracks.
7-15 CITY OF NEW ORLEANS #58(15) hit auto at Byram MS that had driven around crossing gates; driver injured, train delayed 30".
7-15 SILVER METEOR #87(15) left NY 80" late after baggage car 1253, with mail & baggage, derailed in Sunnyside Yard.

CONGRESS WILL RETURN on Nov 29 for its lame-duck session. It must pass appropriations bills for all government agencies, including the DOT (which covers Amtrak too), by Dec 18, when its final adjournment occurs. NARP said that train supporters should press their legislators at once to get Amtrak included in the proposed jobs program in Congress, which has bipartisan support. Some of the jobs supported could be track rebuilding, etc.

THE FIRST RUN OF THE INTERNATIONAL

by Duane W. Roller

On Sunday, October 31, the North American rail passenger network was increased by a mere 2.4 miles, but the significance of that addition far outweighed its mileage. For the first time since early on May 1, 1971 a passenger train traveled in revenue service between Sarnia, Ontario and Port Huron, Michigan, thereby re-establishing service between Toronto and Chicago, one of the most neglected markets on the continent. No longer was the unreliable and expensive change between Detroit and Windsor necessary. Amtrak and VIA officials were unanimous in their optimism at the run's potential success and their surprise at its first-day popularity.

In the 1960s, thru service between Chicago and Toronto was taken for granted. In addition to joint NYC-CP service via Detroit, there were several daily trains via Port Huron over the GTW and CN. The overnight service, the INTERNATIONAL LIMITED, began operation in 1900 between Chicago and Montreal, and lasted (altho cut back to west of Toronto only) until 1971. As American rail service deteriorated in the post-war years, Canadian-owned Grand Trunk Western brought that country's higher standards of service as far as Dearborn Station, Chicago. But all this ended in 1971; in fact, the last GTW departure from Chicago was also the last inter-city departure from Dearborn Station. Service east of Sarnia remained intact, and in fact increased in the 1970s, but the GTW between Chicago and Port Huron and the CN line thru the St. Clair Tunnel to Sarnia were without passenger service.

In September 1974, Amtrak and the state of Michigan, after difficult negotiations with GTW, initiated the BLUE WATER LTD between Chicago and Port Huron; this train, however, ran over the old NYC route between Chicago and Battle Creek where it switched to the GTW. Attempts began almost immediately to have the run extended to Toronto, but a variety of snags developed, and, in fact, attention turned in the late 1970s towards operating thru service via Detroit. The Detroit route was removed from consideration in 1981 as VIA Rail began an expansion of its Windsor (Walterville) station, located on a route not accessible from Detroit. Negotiations for Port Huron thru service were begun again, but collapsed in early 1982, allegedly because of VIA reticence. Then, unexpectedly, it was announced in the summer of 1982 that the thru service would begin in the fall. The name "INTERNATIONAL" (not INTERNATIONAL LIMITED as erroneously shown in the current Amtrak timetable) was chosen, in honor of GTW's premier train of old, but the new train would be a daytime train on the schedule of GTW's MAPLE LEAF, whose name was already in use.

NOW CHICAGO IS... OUR KIND OF TOWN.

Introducing VIA's new daytime train (in co-operation with Amtrak) to Chicago, the "International". All the comforts of train travel, plus downtown-to-downtown service, are yours for a super-economical price. Snack and beverage service is available. The "International" departs daily.

London/Chicago, regular one-way fare: **$65**

*30-day round trip excursion fare: **$97**

*Some conditions do apply.

Daily Ex. Sun.	Sun.		Daily
0810	1300	Toronto, Union Station	2150
0838	1328	Oakville	2120
0849	1339	Burlington W.	–
0903	–	Dundas	–
0928	1413	Brantford	2038
0956	1443	Woodstock	–
1008	–	Ingersoll	–
1035	1515	London	1935
1103	1544	Strathroy	1911
1145	1630	Sarnia	1800
1352	1837	Flint, Michigan	1618
1440	1925	E. Lansing	1527
1555	2040	Battle Creek	1430
1625	2110	Kalamazoo	1354
1802	2247	Chicago, Union Station	1025

For information and reservations, call your Travel Agent or VIA toll-free at 1-800-268 9520. Our phone lines are open 24 hours a day.

TAKE IT EASY. TAKE THE TRAIN.

VIA

Amtrak has billed the new INTERNATIONAL as the fastest train ever between the two cities of Toronto and Chicago, at 10 hours 25 minutes. This is technically true, but it must be remembered that the GTW schedules included many more local stops and a longer route (via GTW Chicago-Battle Creek and via CN's Guelph Subdivision Longon-Toronto), as well as GTW's circuitous exit from Chicago, where the trains actually ran due west for part of their route.

October 31 can be remembered as a festive day in Amtrak history. Ceremonies began at 10am in Union Station, Chicago (a similar ceremony was to be held in Toronto) hosted by Amtrak's Clark Tyler and featuring a number of Canadian and American railroad and government dignitaries. Mayor Jane Byrne had been invited, but was absent; she had also declined the dedication of the new South Shore cars a week earlier. An audience of about 100 saw a series of brief and highly optimistic speakers. There was a table of Amtrak, VIA and Ontario literature, and a large poster heralding the service. Then we adjourned to trackside, which in this case was track 19, on the north side, allowing the train's engine to face the station so that the traditional christening (water from Lakes Michigan and Ontario) could be easily observed. Engine 316 was festooned with Canadian and American flags, and a cardboard drumhead brought up the rear of the train.

Behind engine 316 were revenue cars 21116, 21257, 20211, 21245, and then cars 21035, 21024 and 3103 for dignitaries and the press. Nearly 100 revenue passengers boarded and the rest of us took up positions in car 3103, which was nicely outfitted with a buffet table serving breakfast for the guests of Amtrak. Champagne flowed freely ("We can't take it into Canada, so drink up!" was the cry), and buffet meals and snacks were available throughout the day. Amtrak's efficient Debbie Marciniak, who was largely responsible for the heavy media turnout, was everywhere, handing out attractive press folders in platinum mist, containing timetables, travel brochures, and press releases on the new service and on Amfleet equipment. The ambiance in 3103 was high, and all the media representatives seemed impressed. Those who learned I was representing RTN invariably had kind words for the publication.

Departure was on time at 10:25. A late-running HOOSIER STATE was passed near Englewood. Some time was lost at Hammond and further along the way, but the train was never more than 20 minutes late--not bad for a first run. Photographers were visible all along the route despite the drizzle, and there were crowds at most stations. At Battle Creek's impressive new station, a huge banner read "Battle Creek Welcomes the International Limited," and there was a brief ceremony as the train was officially handed over to the care of the Grand Trunk Western, with cheers from a number of GTW partisans in the audience. The load had swelled to nearly 200 revenue passengers.

At East Lansing a huge crewd boarded, many of whom were Michigan Railroad Club members making the round trip to Port Huron. Revenue load was over 300 by now. Smaller groups waited at Durand, Flint, and Lapeer, and dusk was falling as we arrived Port Huron at 5:33pm, seven minutes early. Westbound train 367 was waiting on track 1; it was being held to allow most of the invited guests to return to Chicago. There was a chaotic scene as dignitaries transferred between trains, those of us going on obtaining our VIA tickets from Debbie Marciniak, and Clark Tyler conducted ceremonies from the observation platform of VIA car "Bedford", which brought up the rear of the westbound, led by an LRC engine and six Tempo cars. The drizzle turned to heavy rain as the ceremonies began; despite this a large crowd showed up to see the first time that two trains visited Amtrak's Port Huron station simultaneously.

Then westbound train 367 was off 15 minutes late at 5:45pm. But we were delayed longer because of the need to get the liquor off before entering Canada; evidently the encouragement to drink more champagne had fallen on deaf ears, for quite a few cases had to be removed. But eventually all was unloaded, the VIA crew was in place, and we were on our way as VIA train 88 at 6:01 pm, 16 minutes late, with 32 revenue passengers and a smaller crowd, mostly VIA people, in car 3103.

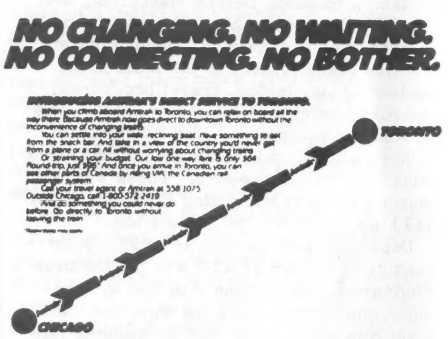
Amtrak trivia buffs may note that Port Huron is the only place a VIA crew is on U.S. soil, since the crew which operates the MONTREALER into St. Albans is actually an Amtrak crew. At any rate, our first movement from Port Huron was backwards, since in one of the pieces of foresight typical of the early years of Amtrak, the new Port Huron station was not placed with direct access to the St. Clair Tunnel. As we moved forward we were almost immediately on CN tracks, which begin 0.4 miles east of the old Port Huron station location, or almost opposite the new station, and then began the slow descent into the tunnel. The support poles for the former electric operation were still visible as we crawled forward; 15mph is the speed limit on this subdivision.

As we crawled on, I learned from Dave Savage, one of my Transport-2000 colleagues about the first westbound run. It had been marred by a novice trainmaster who managed to delay the train 22 minutes in the 1.1 miles

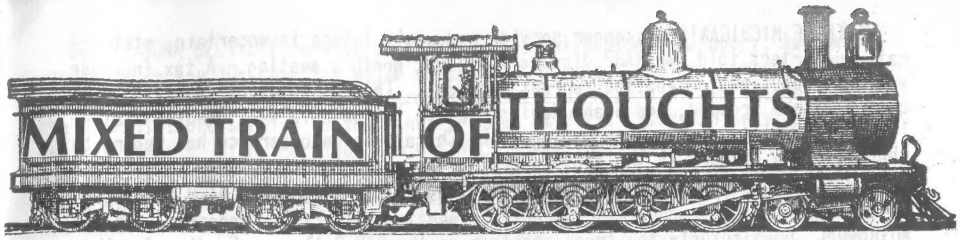
The inaugural INTERNATIONAL makes its stop at Kalamazoo, Michigan.
Photo by the author.

between Toronto Union Station and Bathurst Street. But arrival in Port Huron was virtually on time, and much to everyone's surprise, U.S. border officials boarded in Sarnia and thus had virtually completed their inspection before the train arrived Port Huron. It was hoped that Canadian officials could be similarly persuaded.

Arrival in Sarnia was 22 minutes late; we did not make the time thru the tunnel. Customs inspection was more perfunctory than usual, Canadian liquor was loaded, and a VIA service crew came on to assist the Amtrak crew, which, today at least, was riding thru to Toronto. VIA served free cocktails to those of us in 3103, and Amtrak provided a buffet dinner. From Sarnia, tho, much of the glamor was gone. We were now on a VIA schedule that has existed for a number of years, and despite a few comments from passengers about the "funny train"--the first visit of Amfleet to the region--the remainder of the trip was routine, altho passenger load swelled to 378 out of London and there was a slight loss of time, to 27 minutes late at Oakville, where I detrained. Final arrival at Toronto Union Station was also about half an hour late. Not bad for a first run. Certainly it was a very festive day in which Amtrak made a lot of friends, especially among the media, many of whom had not been on a train in years and were very favorably impressed.



As a final note, the media support paid off in excellent coverage in both the U.S. and Canada, with even some off-line newspapers carrying stories. One notable exception to the media coverage, however, was the Toronto Globe and Mail, which bills itself as Canada's National Newspaper, and has had no report as yet. What has appeared in the Globe and Mail, however, are large ads for American Airlines, extolling its own service to Chicago. This may be coincidence but if a reaction to the INTERNATIONAL, it may be the first time in recent years that an airline has seen potential competition from any rail service other than a short-distance corridor run. Certainly the $96 (U.S.) round trip fare is very competitive despite the longer travel time.



NEW ENGLAND METROLINERS in their first week of operation (they began Oct 31) had very good patronage, Amtrak said--they were running 60 to 70% full by the first weekend of November. However, their on-time performance was said to be near zero the first week.....

AMTRAK PRESIDENT CLAYTOR said in late October that he thinks that all Amtrak trains now in operation can be made to meet the (Congressional ridership) criteria. He and his staff indicated that new sleeping cars for the East, including economy sleepers, won't be ordered in quantity until about 1987. But up to 26 sleepers and 10 dining cars will be rebuilt into HEP cars, from Amtrak's current unused fleet of conventional cars. It is rumored, moreover, that some of them would be rebuilt into cars with economy bedrooms, perhaps along the line of the current Superliner arrangement. It is possible that Amtrak will rebuild all of the 250 cars on its "A" list before ordering the new cars mentioned above.....

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AMTRAK NEWS CONFERENCE of Oct 26, at which President Claytor spoke, covered the highlights of the Oct 31 schedule change--70 hours cut from nationwide schedules, New England Metroliners, faster NE Corridor runs, dining service enhancements. Claytor bragged that Amtrak is three years ahead of schedule in meeting its Congressionally-mandated goal of earning one dollar for every dollar in Federal operating grants. Asked at the news conference what public perception he'd like to change, he said he'd like the public to be aware that Amtrak is a national, not a local rail system. He noted that Amtrak had made "phenomenal" progress before he came to it, and that he intends to move Amtrak in the same positive direction.....

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA station is served by Scenic Trailways, which on Nov 1 rescheduled its buses to connect with the EMPIRE BUILDER. This allows passengers traveling between BUILDER stations west of St. Paul and Eau Claire, La Crosse, and Quad Cities to make convenient connections. Scenic Trailways also began to serve Madison and Chicago on Nov 4, and connections were made possible with the BUILDER at Wisconsin Dells as well as at St. Paul.....

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THE INAUGURAL RUN of the southbound INTERNATIONAL on Oct 31 lost most of its time, according to Amtrak's official report, from the crew taking time to examine flat spots on wheels of the CN car "Bedford", which was carrying officials.....

SUPPORTING THE CARDINAL has been somewhat of a special project of NARP's. At its Oct 8-10 Directors meeting (see also last issue), NARP said that it will not press for daily operation of the CARDINAL now, because such a push could doom the train completely. It's doing okay as a tri-weekly train, NARP said, so it doesn't want to rock the boat at this time. The train must go thru Indianapolis to be really viable, NARP said. Results of a marketing test on the train are not clear, NARP said. The train has been affected by the New York extension and the change to tri-weekly, as well as by the recession, so comparison of current performance with that of the past can't easily be done. As for pushing for new routes, NARP believes that it should concentrate on one route at a time--multi-route additions to the Amtrak system are unlikely. NARP said that Oklahoma service looks like a good contender--perhaps a 4-day-a-week run to balance the tri-weekly EAGLE.....

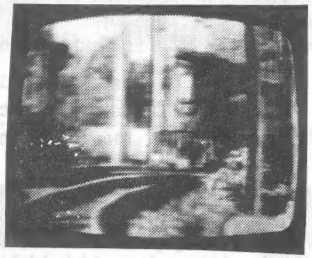
STATE OF MICHIGAN'S passenger service program's future is uncertain, state rail supporters told the NARP directors at last month's meeting. A tax increase would be required to keep the current services. The Passenger Service Aide program has been dropped, and Grand Rapids service is "on hold"--it needs $11 million for 40 miles of track upgrading. The Chicago-Toronto service has begun, but there is some concern in the state over the late Toronto scheduled arrival time.....

NEW YORK RAIL supporters have some problems to face, reported NARP Director Jeff English at the recent NARP Directors' meeting. There are concerns with the ADIRONDAC, particularly the track problems on the D&H Railway. Funding for the state's rail passenger program, from bonds, expires in 1983, so the program will then have to face year-to-year funding uncertainties. It was reported that there is some Canadian interest in a New York-Montreal TGV service.....

SLEEPING CAR 2475, which was involved in the Raleigh NC shootout of Oct 8-11 (see RTN #253), was brought up the L&N to Crawfordsville on Oct 25 and then taken by Conrail to Beech Grove for repair...

★ ★ ★

"GREAT RAILWAY JOURNEYS of the World", the British-made TV film series being shown on Public Television, finally made its way to our local PBS station early this month. The first program was the U.S. journey, from New York to Chicago via the EMPIRE BUILDER, then Chicago to Oakland on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, and Oakland-Los Angeles on the COAST STARLIGHT. The film evidently was made in the fall of 1980, before Superliner equipment was on the rails and before Heritage cars were widely distributed over the system. While the story was interesting, it certainly showed Amtrak in a poor light, compared to its present performance. For rail travelers who have been around Amtrak for a long time, it came as a reminder of how much the system has improved in the last couple of years. The film also dwelled too much on the past and how things were better then. Virtually all the trains in the film were late. The photo above is of a scene from the film, showing a GG-1 locomotive pulling the narrator's BROADWAY LIMITED toward Chicago. The second program covered high-altitude trains of Peru, and the third will be on India.....



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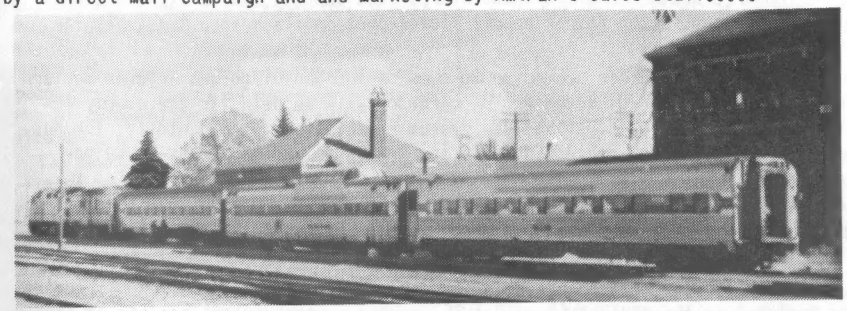
WASHINGTON UNION STATION'S recent inglorious history was told in a Time Magazine article (Oct 25) by Maureen Dowd. Remember that last year a bill was passed in Congress to restore the building to its former use, before the ill-fated Visitors' Center idea. The article notes that bids will be taken soon from prospective tenants for the building--boutiques, restaurants, etc. The roof is to be repaired at a cost of $9 million.....

SAN DIEGO BULLET TRAIN was the subject of a recent L.A. Times writeup which raised the question of whether it was economically feasible (see RTN 253). Reader Charles T. Newton of Del MarCA had his letter published in the Times of Sep 24, in which he argues: "I think fast L.A.-San Diego train service can be had for much less cost. Back in 1952 I rode a Sunday night extra-section train that ran nonstop between Los Angeles and San Diego in 98 minutes (behind a 3700-series steam locomotive), on the Santa Fe route now used by Amtrak. With roadbed improvements, double-tracking, and a Sorrento Valley/Rose Canyon tunnel the time could probably be cut to 90 minutes or less--very close to the 59 minutes claimed for the bullet train, at much less cost".....

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR'S F9 units, 5771, 5762 and 5736, were returned to regular service on Oct 11. According to Mike Disorbio, the regular engineer on the train from Helper to Salt Lake, many disappointed railfans had written the DRGW, and the fuel savings from one GP40 and an F9B was not so great.....

DOR-TO-DOOR DELIVERY service will be started nationwide in January, Amtrak announced on Nov 10, covering major cities on the Amtrak system. Amtrak said the service would be an attractive alternative to the high cost of air freight and the unpredictable service of trucking. Amtrak said its rates and service would "easily compete" with the other two delivery modes, and that it has the advantage of immunity to most weather problems. It s fixed schedules and faster travel times will give it an advantage over trucking in particular, Amtrak noted. The new service is expected to fill the void left by the Railway Express service, which was discontinued before Amtrak was founded. An advertising program about the new express service is set to begin early in 1983, Amtrak said, complemented by a direct mail campaign and and marketing by Amtrak's sales staff.....



NORTH COAST HIAWATHA revival plans are making progress. Amtrak was making an inspection tour of the route starting Nov 9. A 3-day trip, with Sen. John Melcher of Montana accompanying Amtrak officials, planned to make overnight stops in Billings and Helena MT. The state of Montana has officially requested startup of the Southern Route train from Amtrak, and has modified its plan to eliminate the request for reduction of service on the Northern, EMPIRE BUILDER, route. The plan currently asks for a tri-weekly train to split off from the EMPIRE BUILDER at Fargo ND and Sandpoint ID, to make ten station stops in Montana, as before. The choice between serving Helena or Butte has not yet been made. In another development, the Livingston MT station, which was vacated by BN on Jun 27, was donated to the city on Sep 14. The city must put it to some use within two years, or BN will take it back. In the photo above, the depot is at the far right. The building in the center, with the chimney, is a lunchroom. The photo also shows the very last, court-ordered HIAWATHA, on Oct 2, 1979, running with engine 247 and four cars, and with 16 passengers. Photo by W. R. McGee. The Amtrak inspection train ran from Fargo to Billings on Nov 9, Billings-Helena Nov 10, and Helena-Spokane Nov 11. It consisted of an F40 locomotive, Superliner sleeper, Superliner coach, Hi-level coach-dorm transition car, and Amtrak inspection car 10,000.....

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GARDEN STATE SPECIAL, a new NY-Washington train, began operation Nov 1 (it's a daily-except-Sunday train). Train 181 leaves NY at 6:30am and train 186 leaves Washington at 4:30pm, providing a same-day roundtrip service between all Amtrak New Jersey stops and Washington. First train was christened at New Brunswick Nov 1...

THE SILVER PALM, Florida's new Miami-Tampa 403-b train, begins operation Nov 21 and has a special inaugural run Nov 20, leaving Tampa at 10:45am.....

THE WRECKED CRESCENT, from the Oct 6 wreck at Stewart AL, consisting of two engines and 11 cars, was moved on Oct 10 to Beech Grove for repair.....

HOOSIER STATE'S RIDERSHIP has dropped by 30% from first year of operation, we are told. And the EMPIRE BUILDER has reportedly been averaging from 6 to 14 people out of Seattle in late Oct and early Nov, both victims of the recession.....

FIRST CLASS PASSENGERS on the Florida trains, starting Dec 1, will receive free meals, afternoon hors d'oeuvres, and morning newspapers.....

AMTRAK TIMETABLE ERRORS: The following errors were spotted by reader Gordon Gill in the current (Oct 31) Amtrak system timetable: (page 41) The NORTH STAR is shown as departing and arriving St. Paul on the Milwaukee Road, an unlikely routing since the train operates directly between the station located on the Minnesota Transfer Railway and the BN main line, a distance of less than one mile. (Page 43:) The map erroneously shows the point where the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and the SOUTHWEST LIMITED cross (Galesburg IL) to be in Iowa. Old errors still not corrected: (page 35:) One PENNSYLVANIAN arrival time at Harrisburg is missing; (page 36:) CARDINAL is indicated as operating daily; (page 47:) two different EMPIRE BUILDER mileages (a886 and 1866) are shown at Spokane.....

THE GEORGIA RAILROAD is now a part of Seaboard Coast Line's Florence Division, and no longer a Southern Railway subsidiary. The Georgia's mixed trains still operate as before, altho Amtrak hasn't listed them in its system timetable for some time.....

TIJUANA RIVER BRIDGE is scheduled to open on the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway before the end of November. A ceremony will be held for the event, involving the Pacific Southwest Railway Museum Association. Incidentally, the Museum will run its annual Santa Claus Special trains on Dec 4 La Mesa-El Cajon-Lemon Grove CA.....

LAS VEGAS-RENO route will be dropped by Air California Dec 1, leaving only Eastern Airlines and Greyhound to connect the two Nevada gambling capitals.....

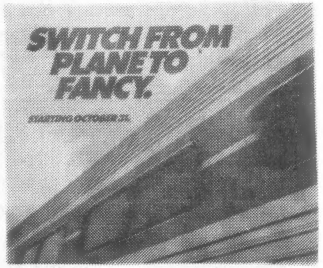
★ ★ ★

SIDE-BY-SIDING: Does this happen every day? Reader David Ribbe reports coming into Montreal on the MONTREALER on Oct 26, making a spectacular crossing of the St. Lawrence River on the Victoria Bridge, running side by side with VIA Rail's OCEAN from Halifax. The MONTREALER is due into Montreal at 9:20am--this is, it was before Oct 31--and the OCEAN is scheduled in at 9:15. And Mr. Ribbe experienced another side by side run on train 440, the CAPITOL LIMITED, out of Cumberland MD on Oct 21. For a few miles the Amtrak train ran alongside a three-car Chessie inspection train consisting of a track geometry car, open platform business car, and on the rear another track geometry car with theater seating and an all-glass rear end--all in attractive Chessie colors.....

REAR THEATER SEATING has also been installed by the Burlington Northern in Great Dome lounge "Glacier View", which the BN got from Amtrak in trade for three baggage cars. The car was seen running on the rear of the EMPIRE BUILDER, train 8, between Seattle and Spokane on Oct 28. Consist of the BUILDER was: engines 372, 329; cars 1157 (bag), 39910 (coach-dorm), 34090, 34006 (coaches), 38001 (diner), 32011 (slpr), BN A10 "Como" (elec. generator), BN A23 "Stampede Pass" (dorm car), and BN A24 "Glacier View" (full-length dome with rear theater seating and full-width rear window).....

★ ★ ★

SHOWN AT RIGHT is an example of Amtrak newspaper ads for the new Oct 31 New England express Metroliner service. Another example is shown on page 7. A third ad we've seen is similar and reads "Leave New York without leaving civilization." Amtrak also has prepared some colorful brochures and leaflets about the service. Portions of some of the leaflets are shown on page 7 also.....



CHEMULT-BEND, OREGON connecting bus from the COAST STARLIGHT will resume operation Dec 15 thru Apr 22, 1983..... THE NORTH STAR operates Fri, Sat, Sun thru Jan 2, with additional weekday service in the Thanksgiving and Christmas periods...

THE CAPITOL LTD and CITY OF NEW ORLEANS will get their dome coaches in late winter or early spring, Amtrak said..... NEW ENGLAND METROLINER service now includes free meals for first class Amclub passengers.....

News in this issue is updated thru Nov 15, 1982.

Glenn Lee (continued from page 9)

arms extending northwest to Yakima, north to Wenatchee, and wast to Lewiston. This immense catastrophe fell upon the Northwest after Indians had taken up housekeeping, and occurred exactly during a large eruption of Mount St. Helens, and geologists today easily find St. Helens ash mixed with flod sediments.

The flood scoured Wallula Gap, and geologists tell us now that it was a full 30 days before the river returned to normal, and that includes drainage of the Willamette Valley in Oregon, which was flooded to a point south of Eugene as water backed up in the gap between Vancouver WA and Longview-Kelso.

The flood brought many "glacial erratics" --large boulders encased in glacial ice which eventually became icebergs in the great flood. I have seen these "erratics" on the hillsides of the Badger Mountains south of Richland, and also have noticed them in Mound Pond, the easternmost of the enclosed swimming holes alongside the BN right-of-way. Their smooth polished sides are in great contrast to the basalt lava talus nearby. What a story they could tell if they could recount their past journeys!

I looked for Mound Pond in the pre-dawn darkness, but it flashed by in a split second. The quick passage of the train illustrated dramatically what a true miracle the railway is--only in a few seconds had we covered the distance it requires an hour or more to walk. The miracle is a major one--as distance is just as much an enemy of man as is disease or ignorance. It is perhaps due to one or both of these latter elements that the miracle of the railway so often is overlooked.

At 4:16am we passed McNary Dam, named for the late Oregon Senator Charles McNary, a major political figure in the 1930s and 40s. The original name for the project was "Umatilla Rapids", which were flooded when the reservoir was filled. At 5:20am there was an eastbound freight in the siding at Towall. The train crewman's radio crackled to life in the coach: "Have you passed any westbound freights yet, No. 27?" The answer apparently was negative, which would give the freight at Towall a chance to get to Pasco without any meets in this train order/timetable territory (CTC is coming).

At 5:23am we passed John Day Dam, the most impressive of the big dams on the lower Columbia. Originally two dams had been planned, one at the present John Day site, and one upstream at Arlington. The plan was altered to include one high dam, which produces 1 1/2 million kilowatts of electricity. The water is raised 110 feet by the dam at the site, and the navigation lock here is a one-stage lock. By contrast, the Gatun locks at the Panama Canal raise ships 85 feet in three stages. The 110-ft lift at John Day probably is too much, and the Army Corps of Engineers has had constant trouble with it, including a bowing out of the south retaining wall under repeated fillings and drainages of the lock.

We were into Wishram at 5:39am, and out at 5:43 on time. The depot lunch was still in business. Good memories of earlier times when I had filed in, at a tender age, for lunch while riding SP&S No. 6.

At 5:51am we passed The Dalles Dam, and the train turned from a westerly course to a northwesterly path for a few miles. To the east, following us just above the basalt rimlands, was the thin, silvery, sliver-like crescent of the old moon--tracking us.

Bingen-White Salmon (just a few miles across the river from Hood River) was a 5-minute stop, from 6:10 to 6:15am, again "on time." At 6:30am we crawled at 10mph thru the "slide area" of unstable ground fro a minute or two, and then resumed speed, passing Bonneville Dam on the newly-relocated line at 6:43am.

At 6am the P.A. system announced that the lounge would be open for coffee bar service. And at 7am the same voice announced that the coffee bar would be closing in a few minutes. Not nearly enough time for passengers to freshen up and wake up, but no doubt some employee was anxious to flee from the train at the first possible moment in Portland.

We arrived Vancouver WA at 7:30am and departed at 7:38. It's only a 20-minute (or less) run to Portland, but 57 minutes are allowed for the trip. The train always comes in "early," and as a result, those meeting incoming passengers find their friends and relatives have been waiting 30-40 minutes or more.

At 7:45am we crossed the Willamette River Bridge, third bridge in a series which includes the Columbia River bridge and the Columbia Slough bridge. A friend told me that on a recent COAST STARLIGHT trip a woman insisted that she had been crossing in and out of Oregon--thinking each bridge spanned the Columbia! Just downstream from us was the tug "Western Comet" with two barges, and the bridge had not been required to open. Just as well. One river captain told me recently: "we can never get thru when Amtrak's around. Those bridge tenders NEVER delay an Amtrak train."

(to be concluded next issue)

CARS & CONSISTS

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5, Chicago Oct 10: engines 321, 265; cars 1156, 1242, 39931, 32040, 32064, 38030, 33013, 31014, 34014, 34056, 34062, 32068, (on at Denver:) "City of Cleveland", "Imperial Sands."

LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 49, New York Oct 10: engines 345 (Croton-Harmon to Albany), 487 (NY-Albany), 344, 342 (Albany-Chicago); cars 1236, 1614, 4601, 4612, 4602, 4642, 3110, 8502, 2432, 2085, 2435*, 2920*, 4611*, 4613*, 4610*, Lehigh Valley 353*. (*on at Albany.)

*INTERNATIONAL. train 367, Toronto-Chicago Oct 31 (inaugural run): (all VIA equipment:) engine 6901; cars 366, 368, 341, 373, 362, 360, "Bedford" 7-cmpt observation-buffet-lounge.

*EAGLE, train 22, St. Louis-Chicago Oct 5: engine 368; cars 20235, 21115, 21113, 21157, 1219. Same, train 21, Chicago-St. Louis Oct 7: engines 363, 335; cars 1143, 39918, 32066, 33020, 34021, 38028, 34066, 34001, 34029, 31028, private cars "Cannonball II", "Sue Anne."

*PIONEER, train 26, Salt Lake City Oct 31 (last one into SLC with sleeper and coach dorm): engine 215; cars 2989 "Pine Fern" (slpr), 39930 (coach-dorm), 38012 (diner), 31032 (coach-baggage). Same, Nov 1: (first train with coach and sleeper removed at Ogden) engine 217; cars 31017 (coach-baggage), 38026 (diner).

*Metroliner Service train 120, Washington Sep 17: engine 934; cars 20671, 21854, 20035, 21809, 21806.

*MINUTE MAN, train 160, NYC Sep 18: Engine 906 (off at New Haven), 202 (on at New Haven); cars 20142, 21087, 21158, 21136, 20026, 21103, 21089, 1378

CAPITOL LIMITED, train 440, Pittsburgh Sep 17: engine 269; cars 1357, 1262*, 2990 "Joseph V. MacDonald"*, 4714*, 4709*, 28007. (*Chicago to Washington thru cars.)

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RAIL FANTRIPS

Jan 29, 1983: Judging of 1983 amateur photo contest at Calif. State RR Museum, Sacramento. Deadline for entries: Jan 16. Themes: Walnut Grove Branch Line; State RR Museum; Western Railroading. Info from 916-445-7373.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

AUGUST 1982 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE/(DECREASE) OVER 1981

METROLINERS	71,841	(25.5)
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL	528,043	9.7
PHIL-NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD	17,148	(20.9)
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	163,673	2.9
PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	63,786	(3.0)
NEW YORK-HARRISBURG	22,136	(4.0)
TOTAL NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	866,627	2.3
NEW YORK-NIAGARA FALLS	72,055	(7.2)
CHICAGO-ST.LOUIS	27,788	1.7
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	14,244	(43.3)
CHICAGO-DETROIT/TOLEDO	35,750	(15.1)
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	12,455	(29.9)
CHICAGO-QUINCY	6,322	(7.0)
LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO	127,101	(1.3)
SEATTLE-EUGENE	5,203	(36.5)
VANCOUVER-SEATTLE		(100.0)
WASHINGTON-CINCINNATI		(100.0)
WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG	14,859	(25.4)
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	20,248	(13.5)
NEW YORK-MONTREAL	12,459	(8.8)
CHICAGO-PORT HURON	9,908	(11.4)
CHICAGO-DUBUQUE		(100.0)
CHICAGO-DULUTH	18,333	38.0
CHICAGO-VALPARAISO	20,627	17.2
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	6,681	(18.6)
CHICAGO-PEORIA		(100.0)
CHICAGO-KANSAS CITY	13,473	5.4
PHILADELPHIA-PITTSBURGH	9,239	(15.5)
PORTLAND-EUGENE		(100.0)
LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO	8,556	.0
TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE	435,301	(12.3)
WASHINGTON-MONTREAL	18,795	.3
NEW YORK-FLORIDA	68,226	(9.5)
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON	30,091	(1.5)
CHICAGO-CINCINNATI-WASHINGTON	10,469	(50.9)
CHICAGO-SEATTLE (N)	50,805	.7
CHICAGO-SAN FRANCISCO	37,712	(6.6)
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	34,753	(13.6)
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	22,490	(2.3)
CHICAGO-TEXAS	13,032	(44.6)
LOS ANGELES-NEW ORLEANS	10,623	(8.9)
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	57,883	(11.3)
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	39,356	.4
BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS	9,582	19.3
NEW YORK-SAVANNAH	20,054	4.1
SEATTLE-SALT LAKE CTY/CHI	18,019	(22.7)
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS	30,301	(4.7)
LOS ANGELES/OGDEN-CHI	14,717	(9.7)
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	486,908	(9.6)
SPECIAL TRAINS	3,500	.0
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,792,336	(4.8)

At long last Amtrak has released the August ridership figures (see RTN 251 for July figures). August Amtrak patronage wasn't so bad, considering the recession. Systemwide ridership was down 4.8%, compared to a drop of 8.6% the previous month. NE Corridor patronage was up 2.3%, compared to a drop of 3.8% in July. Short- and long-distance categories were both down, but neither was down so much as it was in July. Remember that all the minus 100% entries in the Short Distance category indicate trains that were discontinued in Oct 1981. (RTN estimates that if these routes had not been discontinued, short distance ridership would be down only about 5.9% instead of 12.3% in August.)

As the three summer months progressed this year, Amtrak patronage became better and better; July was better than June and August was better than July (in terms of comparison with summer 1981 figures). August travel is always the heaviest of the summer months. The pattern this year suggests that many people may have stayed close to home. Ridership in the industrial Northeast was quite high for August, when people are traditionally away at vacation areas.

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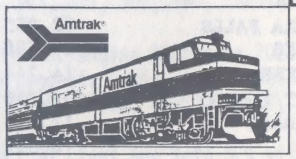

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